

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

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R 011504Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8295

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USLO PEKING

UNCLAS ADDIS ABABA 3594

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ET, ELAB, ETRN

SUBJECT: CIVIL AVIATION STRIKE SETTLED

REFS: ADDIS 3449, 3230 AND PREVIOUS

1. MARATHON NEGOTIATING SESSION ON MARCH 31, GUIDED BY LT. MICHAEL, VICE MINISTER IN CHARGE OF LABOR DEPARTMENT, REACHED COMPROMISE ON SETTLEMENT TERMS FOR 21 DAY STRIKE BY 800 EMPLOYEES OF IEG CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY. COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY ALREADY ESTABLISHED TO INVESTIGATE EMPLOYEES' CHARGES OF MALFEASANCE BY FIVE SENIOR MOST OFFICIALS OF CAA WILL BE EXPANDED TO NINE MEMBERS AND WILL INCLUDE FOUR MEMBERS FROM OUTSIDE MINISTRY OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS. SEPARATE COMMITTEE WITH SEVEN REPRESENTATIVES OF EMPLOYEES AND SIMILAR NUMBER FROM MINISTRY WILL NEGOTIATE DISPUTES OVER WAGES AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT AND CONCLUDE ITS WORK WITHIN ONE MONTH. ISSUE OF RIGHT TO FORM UNION TO BE RESOLVED BY LABOR DEPARTMENT. FINALLY, IT AGREED THERE WOULD BE NO PUNISHMENT OR RETRIBUTION AGAINST EMPLOYEES ON

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ACCOUNT OF STRIKE, BUT ALL SHOULD WORK TO REESTABLISH GOODWILL

IN CAA. WAGES FOR PERIOD OF STRIKE WILL NOT BE PAID.

2. STRIKE BEGAN MARCH 12 IN WAKE OF MARCH 7-10 GENERAL STRIKE. ABSENCE OF UNION OR STAFF ASSOCIATION CREATED CONFUSION IMMEDIATELY AS NOBODY KNEW WHO WAS REPRESENTING EMPLOYEES' INTERESTS. COMMITTEE WAS SHORTLY FORMED, HOWEVER, AND INITIAL EFFORTS WERE MADE BY LABOR DEPARTMENT CONCILIATORS TO RESOLVE ISSUES IN DISPUTE. AS PRINCIPAL DEMAND PROVED TO BE DISMISSAL OF CAA ADMINISTRATOR, DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER, AIRPORT MANAGER AND PERSONNEL MANAGER, CONCILIATION EFFORTS FAILED.

3. MINISTER OF TELECOMMUNICATION LT. GEN. ASSEFA AYENE TOOK FIRM STAND THAT HE WOULD NOT DISMISS OFFICIALS UNLESS MALFEASANCE PROVEN. COMMITTEE FORMED WITHIN MINISTRY TO INVESTIGATE CHARGES WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO CAA EMPLOYEES WHO CLAIMED MEMBERS WERE BIASED. CAA THEN ORDERED EMPLOYEES TO RETURN TO WORK OR FACE TERMINATION THEIR EMPLOYMENT. DEADLOCK COMPLETE IN LAST WEEK OF MARCH.

4. COMMITTEE OF FOURTEEN MEMBERS OF CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES WAS APPOINTED AND AFTER BRIEF SURVEY OF SITUATION RECOMMENDED THAT SINCE NATION COULD NO LONGER SUFFER FROM LACK OF VITAL AVIATION SERVICES CAA OFFICIALS SHOULD BE DISMISSED. AGAIN MINISTER REFUSED TO FIRE ANYONE ON UNPROVEN CHARGES.

5. LT. MICHAEL UNDERTOOK CASE AT BEHEST OF PRIME MINISTER. INITIAL EFFORT ON MARCH 30 WAS ABORTIVE, BUT ALL DAY AND LATE NIGHT NEGOTIATIONS ON MARCH 31 WERE SUCCESSFUL. COMMITTEE OF CAA EMPLOYEES REPORTED BACK TO FULL SESSION OF CAA EMPLOYEES APRIL 1 HELD IN CELU HEADQUARTERS. RETURN TO WORK BEGAN IN LATE AFTERNOON APRIL 1.

6. CAA ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE HAS INFORMED EMBASSY THAT MEN NOW CHECKING EQUIPMENT. CAA BELIEVES IT WILL AGAIN BE OPERATIONAL AND ABLE HANDLE INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS BY TONIGHT OR TOMORROW. WYMAN

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